

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 02257 022219Z

63

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SNM-02 /013 W
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P R 022105Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3787
DEA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 2257

DEPT FOR ARA AND S/NM

DEA FOR EOIL

CARACAS FOR DEA

FROM AMBASSADOR

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR CO
SUBJ: NARCOTICS: OPERATION KITCHEN

1. NOW THAT OPERATION KITCHEN HAS OFFICIALLY ENDED, I HAVE CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY THAT DEA-WASHINGTON MAY WISH TO PUBLICIZE IN THE US THE EXCELLENT RESULTS OBTAINED FROM THIS COMBINED EFFORT. IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT SUCH PUBLICITY -- WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY BE PLAYED BACK HERE -- WOULD BACKFIRE LOCALLY, CAUSE US POLITICAL PROBLEMS AND HARM OUR WORKING RELATIONS WITH GOC ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.

2. ANY DEA MOVE TO CALL PUBLIC ATTENTION TO ITS PARTICIPATION IN KITCHEN WOULD HIT US FIRST ON THE POLITICAL LEVEL. THOUGH THE GOC HAS AND CONTINUES TO WORK CLOSELY WITH DEA, IT NEVER RPT NEVER PUBLICIZES DEA'S PART IN THESE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS. OUR EFFORTS TO DO SO WOULD BE PICKED UP IMMEDIATELY BY THE LOCAL PRESS AND PLAYED BACK IN A NEGATIVE FASHION. FACED WITH QUESTIONS ON WHY IT ALLOWS FOREIGN AGENTS TO OPERATE WITHIN COLOMBIA, THE GOC WOULD REACT DEFENSIVELY. WE COULD NOT PREDICT WHAT COURSE THIS DEFENSE WOULD TAKE. CONFIDENTIAL

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SIVE REACTION WOULD TAKE, BUT IT COULD SOUR THE ATMOSPHERE AT

LEAST TEMPORARILY AND PERHAPS DO PERMANENT HARM TO OUR WORKING RELATIONS IN THE DRUG FIELD.

3. AT A LOWER LEVEL, I SHOULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT VARIOUS POLICE PRESS RELEASES ON KITCHEN HAVE MADE NO MENTION OF OPERATION KITCHEN PER SE OR OF DEA'S CLOSE INVOLVEMENT IN THAT OPERATION. SO FAR AS WE CAN ASCERTAIN, THE POLICE HAVE NO INTENTION OF PUBLICIZING KITCHEN AS AN OPERATION OR DEA'S PART IN IT. THIS IS BECAUSE THE POLICE ARE STILL INVESTIGATING LEADS AGAINST MAJOR TRAFFICKERS AND THEY DO NOT WANT TO GIVE SUSPECTS WARNING THAT THEY MIGHT BE UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

3. FOR ALL THE ABOVE REASONS, I ASK DEA NOT TO PUBLICIZE ITS PART IN KITCHEN. I HAVE, HOWEVER, NO OBJECTION TO PRIVATE BRIEFINGS ON KITCHEN FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER LEADERS WHO HAVE AN OBVIOUS NEED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS SUCCESSFUL GOC-USG EFFORT. VAKY

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